

National Identity and Anxiety in the Captivity Narratives  
Of Mary Rowlandson and Mary Godfrey

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In the past twenty years, the problem of voice and gender in captivity narrative has received much scholarly attention. Critical texts such as Rajini Srikanth's "Ventriloquism in the Captivity Narrative: White Women Challenge European American Patriarchy" (2002) and Lorraine Carroll's *Rhetorical Drag: Gender Impersonation, Captivity, and the Writing of History* (2007) point to the tension between the captive's female voice and the male discourse in which she writes, often embodied in the male editor, amanuensis, or publisher<sup>1</sup>. According to Carroll, male editors and amanuenses directly or implicitly assumed the captive's voice, using "rhetorical drag" to "writ[e] history and shap[e] their own historical movements" (Carroll 3). Teresa Toulouse explores the political use of appropriated captive voices in *The Captive's Position: Female Narrative, Male Identity, and Royal Authority in Colonial New England*. There, she argues that Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative supported "a providential reading of the... Indian war" and "served as an indirect rhetorical salvo in a cultural battle that involved competing beliefs about traditional 'New' English versus 'royal' English sovereignty" (Toulouse 21-22). According to Toulouse, "A text about an orthodox *woman's* experience of Indian captivity thus seems to have been intended to defend and to stabilize a particular construction of colonial *male* identity" (22).

I take Toulouse's insight about female experience and male identity in colonial New England as a starting point for exploring an 1836 captivity narrative, *An Authentic Narrative of the Seminole War; and the Miraculous Escape of Mrs. Mary Godfrey, and Her Four Female Children*. There is virtually no scholarship in *An Authentic Narrative*, though Kathryn Zabelle

Derounian-Stodola includes it in her Penguin Classics anthology *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives*. Unlike Rowlandson's *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, the anonymously-authored *An Authentic Narrative* is almost certainly fabricated. There are no records of a Mrs. Mary Godfrey being captured and redeemed, or even existing at all. Even at the time of publication, the facts of the captivity were suspect. One purchaser of *An Authentic Narrative* wrote a brief commentary in the margin, calling it ““a real catch-penny”” and a ““commentary for gulls [gullible people]”” (qtd. in “Mary Godfrey” 215). However, like Rowlandson's captivity narrative, *An Authentic Narrative* attempts to use a woman's experience of captivity to defend and stabilize a national male identity. Written only twenty-five years before the Civil War, *An Authentic Narrative* evinces a deeper anxiety about gender, specifically a stable masculine national identity, than that of colonial New England. *An Authentic Narrative* is a variation on the captivity narrative genre that indicates a shift toward the white fraternal national identity described by Dana E. Nelson, even as the female captive's rescue by an escaped slave and the deaths of the white, male rescuers point to the fundamental incoherence of this national identity.

The anxiety about a stable national identity is articulated through two remarkably ambiguous figures: a rescuing maroon and a failed rescuer named Major Dade. Unlike most captivity narratives, Mary Godfrey is not redeemed by a white male authority. Instead, a maroon, an escaped slave allied with the Seminoles, finds her. He raises his hand to tomahawk her, suddenly recalls his own enslaved wife and children, and spares her. He then guides Godfrey and her children to a nearby regiment of volunteers but does not accompany them to the camp. Allied with the Seminoles yet humanized by his sympathetic relationship to his family, providing the proper redemptive end to the captivity yet displacing the proper rescuer, the maroon fluctuates between the traditional savage/civil binaries of the captivity narrative tradition. The figure of

Major Dade is likewise unusual and ambiguous. Major Dade, a heroic yet oddly nondescript leader of a “fated band, an elite of energy, patriotism, military skill and constant courage” leads his small regiment to join General Clinch, who is encamped at Fort King and preparing to engage the Seminoles. Major Dade is ambushed by “a large body of Indians, supposed to number from 800 to 1000, and were cut to pieces” (Anon. 226). The “butchery” of the encounter still called Major Dade’s Massacre spurs Generals Clinch and Gaines to retaliate. The final lines of the narrative try to move the reader in like fashion: “The savages, unsubdued, continue fearlessly to stalk over the graves of Major Dade and his brave companions” (Anon. 234). Like the captive in traditional narratives, Major Dade takes on a symbolic relation to the body politic and the reader. If, as Teresa Toulouse argues, both the Massachusetts colony and male readers of Rowlandson’s text were expected to identify with the passive captive, the crucial shift in *An Authentic Narrative* is that the readers now identify with an active, heroic, yet ultimately doomed white rescuer. My close reading of *An Authentic Narrative* side-by-side with the codifying text of the captivity narrative tradition, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* demonstrates the latter’s greater interest in, and anxiety about, the gender of national identity. While *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* takes Rowlandson’s body as synecdoche of the American body politic, *An Authentic Narrative* re-genders the nation as masculine and embodied by Major Dade.

A bestseller in its day, Mary Rowlandson’s captivity quickly captured the attention of the trans-atlantic audience. Her narrative went through four printings in its first year, and was published in London the same year as a “true history,” an exciting and somewhat exotic adventure story.<sup>2</sup> In colonial New England, she was hailed as a steadfast Christian who underwent great trials and returned faithful and triumphant. In England, her story joined the body

of true histories and Barbary captivity narratives—and gave the London audience a new image of life in the colonies (Voigt 25). Both editions were published with a short introduction by an anonymous editor (“Ter Amicus”) and a sermon by her husband, *The Possibility of God’s Forsaking a people, That have been visibly near & dear to him*. The introduction and the attached sermon interpret Rowlandson’s captivity and amplify the religious and political themes introduced in her narration to the point that, taking the document as a whole, Rowlandson’s subjective narration is often subordinated to these themes. Rowlandson uses Puritan theology (particularly Biblical typology) to structure her narration of events. The sermon expands and strengthens this interpretation and turns Rowlandson’s captivity into a jeremiad, a religious argument for repentance and change to avoid further judgment, directed at the English colonists. Toulouse notes the narrative’s importance to the “interpretation of the Indian war” and to “ministerial responses to the accelerated social and economic transformations of this postwar period” (Toulouse 32-33). Under covenantal theology, the “essence of the social order” in Massachusetts, the ministers held a position of power and authority over women, children, servants and laymen, yet simultaneously occupied a feminized position of submission and reverence before God and the first-generation ministerial “fathers” (Toulouse 41). Rowlandson’s position as a “submissive, obedient, passive female captive provides the providentially appropriate” yet essentially ambivalent position “for colonial men to inhabit in the face of theological, political, even literal conflicts” between the orthodoxy of the fathers and the “English ‘Babylon’” of royal English sovereignty (Toulouse 42-43). Male readers of *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* would identify with Rowlandson’s “captive position,” and Rowlandson became a synecdoche for the body politic which occupied a feminized, yet ambivalent, position before royal English authority.

Much scholarship, including Christopher Castiglia's seminal survey of the captivity narrative, assumes this identification of the nation with the female captive is a fundamental characteristic of the captivity narrative (Castiglia 11). However, *An Authentic Narrative* complicates this argument. In contrast to the immense popularity of Rowlandson's text, *An Authentic Narrative* enjoyed little widespread success. It was published in 1836 as a twenty-four-page pamphlet with a handbill foldout engraving titled "The Massacre of the Whites by the Indians and Blacks in Florida" (Anon. 214). A customer's notes at the top of the handbill indicate that the bill and pamphlet were handed around to an audience while the salesman gave his pitch. Though set in Florida, the text seems intended for a Northern audience. It was initially published by Daniel L. Blanchard in Providence, Rhode Island, and reprinted the same year in New York, New York, with an added sensational story and the new title *A True and Authentic Account of the Indian War in Florida, Giving the Full Particulars Respecting the Murder of the Widow Robbins, and the Providential Escape of Her Daughter Aurelia, and Her Lover, Mr. Charles Somers, After Suffering Almost Innumerable Hardships*. Later in 1836, another New York publisher, J. Nadine, circulated a Second Seminole War propaganda text possibly based off the Major Dade narrative in *An Authentic Narrative*, entitled *A Correct and Authentic Narrative of the Indian War in Florida: With a Description of Maj. Dade's Massacre, and an Account of the Extreme Suffering, for Want of Provision, of the Army—Having Been Obligated to Eat Horses' and Dogs' Flesh*.

Like *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, *An Authentic Narrative* is set during an Indian war and opens by summarizing the conflict which leads up to the captivity. However, *An Authentic Narrative* is organized much differently than *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*. It is worth keeping in mind the narrative's fictional nature, as both the format and the stories are

odd, almost bizarre at points. For instance, the text spends several paragraphs on a general's dog being strangled to death. Additionally, the narrative is both political rhetoric and a commodity dependent on its ability to "hook" readers, and the style and scope of narration are highly melodramatic. The introductory section of *An Authentic Narrative* is longer and more complex than Rowlandson's introduction. There, the anonymous "Ter Amicus" seemed content to instruct the reader how to approach the text and leave the bulk of the narration to Rowlandson; in *An Authentic Narrative*, the author describes the Seminoles as fearful products of miscegenation, narrates the events leading up to the war, and briefly narrates several "shocking occurrences" including the murder of the Cooley family, the flight of the widow Rigley, and a lengthy narration of Godfrey's captivity (Anon. 220-221). "Godfrey's" first-person narration immediately follows the narrator's third-person version, so the reader hears the story twice. After the first-person narration ends, the author continues to construct a narrative of the War: more atrocities suffered by white Floridians, including a bloody slave uprising, prompt the Army (represented by heroic Major Dade and his company) to respond. In the final five pages, the narrative takes on the tone of an adventure novel as Major Dade and his brave company pursue and face down the demonic Seminoles, who have allied with escaped slaves. By way of comparison, the double narrative of Godfrey's capture took up three pages. Major Dade's company is held back by the bureaucratic General Gaines, who insists on attempting a parley with the "cunning" Seminoles, and Major Dade is shot by "Micanopy, the head chief" (Derounian-Stodola 233). The narrative concludes with a stirring appeal to the reader's moral outrage as "the savages, unsubdued, continue fearlessly to stalk over the graves of Major Dade and his brave companions" (Derounian-Stodola 234). *An Authentic Narrative* evinces similar ambivalence towards a centralized authority in Dade's death and the subsequent failure of



national authority (in the figures of Generals Clinch, Gaines, and Scott) to avenge Dade and put down the uprising.

Before discussing the differences between *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* and *An Authentic Narrative*, it is important to place them in relation to one another within the captivity narrative tradition. Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative, published as *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God, Together With the Faithfulness of His Promises Displayed* in 1682, remains the most famous and perhaps the most influential narrative on the subsequent captivity narrative tradition. Early captivity narrative scholar Richard Slotkin describes Rowlandson's narrative as "an archetype... the initiation of a genre of narrative within American culture, the primary model of which all subsequent captivities are diminished copies, or types" (Slotkin 102). However, Slotkin limits the captivity narrative "genre" to colonial and Revolutionary New England. More recently, Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola argues for an inclusive and continuous model, the captivity narrative *tradition*: a long line of narratives which begin with and are highly influenced by Rowlandson's narrative, but evolve and adapt as they are deployed in varying historical and cultural contexts ("Captivity and the Literary Imagination" 109-110). Key tropes, themes, images, and uses of *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* return in various forms throughout the tradition. The common "pattern" of Rowlandson's captivity narrative includes an attack on civilized domesticity by savages, the capture and removal of a white woman (often Christian, often a mother) into a savage space, a sleepless first night on the ground, the captive's body paralleling her "spirit" in adjusting to the wilderness, some degree of acculturation, turning to religion, repentance and dependency on some form of higher authority (religious and/or national), and redemption by a white masculinized authority.

*An Authentic Narrative* loosely follows this pattern, but never completely and typically. Often, an element of Rowlandson's narrative is invoked, yet subtly altered. For example, Rowlandson continuously interprets her experience through Scripture and typology, and gains spiritual strength from God when her physical and emotional strength gives out. In the ninth remove, her hopes of returning home are frustrated and she is terribly hungry: "I went up and down mourning and lamenting: and my spirit was ready to sink, with the thoughts of my poor Children...I repaired... to my Bible (my great comfort in that time) and that Scripture came to my hand, *Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee*, Psal. 55.22" (Rowlandson 84). In *An Authentic Narrative*, Godfrey is placed in an identical situation. She hoped to escape the swamp, but the Seminoles return. She is extremely hungry and worried about her children, who are weak from hunger. Like Rowlandson, she turns to God: "But, in this hour of severe affliction, I did not fail to look to and to call upon the One who had power to save and to deliver us... By the assistance of kind Providence, we were enabled to pass another night" ("*An Authentic Narrative*" 223). Godfrey's plea to a vaguely theist "One" or "Providence" complicates the captivity narrative's use of faith. It is also the only time religion is referenced, not only in Godfrey's first-hand account, but in the entire document. Unlike Rowlandson, Godfrey does not quote Scripture or record her prayer, and the past tense of "had power to save us" expresses doubts about the strength of Providence. It also raises the question of why God does not deliver Godfrey. Rowlandson, in typical Calvinist manner, raises and answers this question multiple times throughout her narrative: "But I knew that [God] laid upon me less than I deserved" (Rowlandson 88). Godfrey raises the problem of theodicy obliquely and quickly passes on, creating doubt about the stability and strength of authority.

However, the most important elements of Rowlandson's text which appear in *An Authentic Narrative* are two racial tropes. First, in both texts the Native Americans initially appear as "yelling savages," but become intelligible as they enable the captive to perform femininity. Second, the captive critiques the white, male, Christian rescuer(s) who redeem her. In *An Authentic Narrative*, this critique is amplified by the subsequent war narratives and destabilizes the national, masculine authority represented by the rescuer and/or Major Dade. Rowlandson's text established the trope of the "yelling savage" who speaks as he enables the captive to maintain her feminine identity. Rowlandson's text begins with the Native American war party depicted as "a company of hell-hounds, roaring, singing, ranting, and insulting, as if they have torn our very hearts out" (Rowlandson 70). Rowlandson places rhetorical emphasis on the Narragansetts' bestiality by calling them "ravenous beasts" and describing their "savageness and brutishness" (71). Accordingly, the Native Americans speak with brutish "roaring, singing, ranting, and insulting." They occasionally ask her questions or give her orders, but in the first few removes, the Native Americans' speech is paraphrased or attributed to a vague, unarticulated "they." "I asked them whether I might not lodge in the house that night, to which they answered, 'What, will ye love English men still?'...Oh the roaring, and singing and dancing, and yelling, of those black creatures of the night, which made the place a lively resemblance of hell" (Rowlandson 71). The Natives' speech is characterized as inarticulate roaring or as demonic utterances which emanate from the group, not an individual speaker. Rowlandson continues to describe the Native Americans as a vague, bestial (or demonic) "they" until the end of the seventh remove, when "an Indian... with a basket of horse-liver" offers her a piece and expresses surprise that she can eat it, and she finally gains an audience with King Philip in the eighth remove (Rowlandson 81).

There, King Philip gains a voice and temporarily legitimized authority as he enables Rowlandson to preserve her feminine identity. A major dilemma the captive faces is the absence of legitimate, masculine authority. Not only is this part of the pathos—the woman under threat, without rescuers, tugs at the reader’s heart-strings—it forces the captive to find new ways to maintain her feminine identity. For Mary Rowlandson, this is especially difficult because of the mutually dependent gender binary of covenantal theology. How can a Puritan wife and mother perform a femininity based on submission, when there are no clear, legitimate authorities in sight? Rowlandson’s shifts her negative description of Native American culture by interpreting her new social conditions with a familiar social hierarchy. King Philip and her master are both inscribed with key aspects of Puritan masculinity—married and heads of their households. In projecting familiar roles onto King Philip and her master, Rowlandson humanizes them and decreases their otherness. However, this movement is restricted to the conditions of captivity. King Philip is not a legitimate king to the colonists. At the time the narrative’s publication, Philip’s head and dismembered body were being circulated throughout the colonies in a display of corporal and spectacular punishment. The captivity thus creates a space in which King Philip, and Rowlandson’s “master,” can gain agency and civilized speech when that agency and speech is necessary to preserve the captive’s feminine identity. Just as captivity forced the “female captive” to rely on “entirely her own resources” and justified her temporary “crossing-over into a [different] reality,” one in which she gained agency, captivity similarly enables non-white men to temporarily gain agency and authority (Srikanth 88).

It is this double enabling function that humanizes King Philip and the other Native Americans, as Rowlandson is able to rhetorically create and “return to” a familiar societal organization. Her meeting with King Philip is not only a humanization of the Other, a

transformation of the dumb, faceless savage to a speaking king, it continues a Biblically-derived minor theme in Rowlandson's text: male authority and female "amazement" (stunned fear). Puritan sermons on marriage and gender roles often cite 1 Peter 3:6: "Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement" (KJV). This verse links calling a male authority figure "lord" with being "not afraid with any amazement." Rowlandson refers to herself and her fellow captives as "amazed" several times, usually under times of great duress and in the absence of a clear authority structure. At the scene of the capture, the men of the settlement are away on business, killed in the attack, or flee, and the women are unable to escape the house: "Now might we hear Mothers & Children crying out for themselves, and one another, *Lord, What shall we do?*... Thus were we butchered by those merciless Heathen, standing amazed, with the blood running down to our heels" (Rowlandson 69). As Rowlandson's description of the desperate household of women and children shows, the capture takes place in a total absence of male authority and presence (even Rowlandson's young nephew William is shot in the leg and incapacitated). The resulting chaotic violence and women's "amazement" is due as much to the absence of legitimate male leaders as it is to the presence of "merciless Heathen[s]."

Just before King Philip joins the group which has captured Rowlandson, she describes herself sitting "alone" and amazed in the midst of a chaotic, unstructured group. "When I came ashore, they gathered all about me, I sitting alone in the midst. I observed they asked each other questions, and laughed, and rejoiced over their gains and victories. Then my heart began to fail, and I fell a-weeping... [I] had been all this time in a maze, and like one astonished" (Rowlandson 82). Rowlandson's amazement is alleviated when King Philip receives her in his tent: "He bade me come in and sit down, and asked me whether I would smoke (a usual

compliment nowadays among saints and sinners)” and, the next day “Phillip spake to me to make a shirt for his boy, which I did, for which he offered me a shilling” (Rowlandson 82-83). King Philip’s shilling not only restores Rowlandson’s ability to own property, it later enables her to buy food, invite her master to dinner, and gain his favor. By asserting his position of political authority (as a king), King Philip returns masculine structure and order to the savage space. He also re-establishes some degree of familiarity in interaction by inviting Rowlandson to come into his tent and to sit down, just as a Puritan minister or assembly member might address Rowlandson in Lancaster, and offering her tobacco. After the first meeting with King Philip, Rowlandson is “bidden” by him to make a series of garments, sometimes as required obedience and sometimes for payment. When Rowlandson obeys, King Philip invites her to dinner, where she gains pleasure from eating for the first time in the narrative, saying “I thought I never tasted pleasanter meat in my life” (Rowlandson 85). After the dinner, she finds her relationship with her master and mistress more equal and less insecure, going to far as to criticize her mistress as “proud gossip” (Rowlandson 85). The same problem of male absence which began the captivity and enabled the captive to gain agency prompts a temporary promotion of a non-white man to a position of authority and agency.

Similarly, *An Authentic Narrative* humanizes the non-white figure (the maroon who has joined the Seminoles) and allows him to speak as he enables performance of femininity. Like Rowlandson’s, Godfrey’s captivity begins with a savage attack occasioned by male absence: “The husband of this unfortunate woman had been, with others, drafted and compelled to leave his family unprotected... it was not until she heard the frightful yells of the approaching savages, and the inmates flying in every direction to escape from the awful death... that she was induced to follow their example” (Anon. 221). Male absence is an important theme throughout *An*

*Authentic Narrative*. Not only Godfrey's captivity, but almost every other attack begins with the absence of male authority. "Mr. C. was from home—they [Seminoles and Mr. C.'s uprising slaves] murdered his wife, three children... Not far distant dwelt another family—the widow Rigley, her two daughters, and an only son—they were closely pursued by the savages" (Anon. 219-220, 221). Later, the author claims the attacks, and male absence, are not isolated or unusual: "There were other instances... in consequence of the absence of the husband... but little mercy was shown their wives and children if left behind" (Anon. 225). The next sentence describes "a mother and two young children" who are almost taken captive but rescued at the last minute by "two armed white men" (Anon. 225). Godfrey's captivity also portrays a heightened sense of male absence because she does not interact with anyone but her four daughters until the maroon appears. She flees to a swamp where she is encircled by the Seminole, but never interacts or speaks with them. She and her daughters remain insulated from the Seminole, and they move facelessly behind the trees, shouting unintelligibly. On the first day, "Their frightful yells were heard without a moment's cessation during the whole day;" on the second, "the frightful whoopings of the Indians had not ceased" (Anon. 223-224). It is not until "a straggling black, who had enlisted in the cause of the enemy," hears "the pitiful moans of her tender babe" that a male figure enters.

In this narrative, the savage male figure is not Native American, though closely linked to the Seminole. The opening paragraph of *An Authentic Narrative* warns that the Seminole "are now a different race, being a mixture of Creeks, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Cherokees, Mickasookees, and Blacks" (Anon. 217). Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, many slaves escaped to join the Seminole Nation, intermarry, and become Black Seminole ("Mary Godfrey" 213). The maroon thus carries both the stereotype of "the American

Indian male as demonic” and “the bestial and dangerous African American male slave” commonly linked to “the image of the frail, pure, and chaste Southern white woman” in captivity narratives (Srikanth 91). However, while the narrative initially deploys these stereotypes, the portrayal of the maroon suddenly changes and, like King Philip, he takes authority and enables Godfrey to perform femininity. When the maroon first appears, Godfrey’s daughters shriek and “clinging to their parent, ...implor[ed] that protection which she, poor woman, was unable to afford them” as “The negro, grinning a ghastly smile... approached them with uplifted axe, apparently intent on their destruction!” (Anon. 222) The nineteenth-century gender theory of separate spheres places protection through force in the male, public, military sphere. Godfrey’s inability to offer this protection is linked to her gender by the juxtaposition of “she, poor woman” and “unable to afford them.” Godfrey’s response—falling on her knees and begging for mercy—is exaggeratedly feminine gesture, and constitutes the melodramatic “resistance through suffering,” described by Peter Brooks, of the innocent heroine that assures her triumph: “The distracted mother at this point begged for the lives of her children; and on pointing to her almost expiring infant, the negro dropped his axe, and after contemplating the sad spectacle for a few minutes, appeared much affected, and *broke silence* by assuring Mrs. G. that... neither she nor her children should be hurt...” (emphasis mine) (Anon. 222). The maroon explains that “he had two children who were held in bondage by the whites” and is thus sympathetic to her plight. He then “further manifested his pity” by providing food, water, and blankets for Godfrey and her daughters and guiding her to “a company of mounted volunteers (whites),” become sympathetic himself (Anon. 223). Godfrey’s melodramatic, feminine performance relies on the maroon’s threat to set the scene for the “sad spectacle,” and the maroon’s “breaking silence” and moving from savage threat to “kind deliverer” relies on her feminine performance of vulnerability and



the absence of a white male rescuer. Godfrey's feminine performance is also one of sentimental affect which transforms the the maroon, making him "much affected" (Anon. 222). Like Rowlandson's rhetorical projection of familiar roles, Godfrey's contagious affect humanizes the maroon by translating him from a savage, other role to familiar, domestic one. The maroon recalls his role as a father and head of a family and substitutes the normative behavior for the role of father (provider, protector) for the expected behavior of the murderous savage. In assuming this familiar, domestic role with respect to Godfrey, the maroon becomes sympathetic, human, and intelligible. Moreover, Mary Godfrey describes the maroon's arrival as the moment of "our relief," releasing her from her previous emotional turmoil which "is impossible to describe correctly" (Anon. 224). The maroon's transformation into family provider not only humanizes him, it relieves Godfrey's amazement.

Notwithstanding the critique of slavery in the maroon's sympathetic affection for his enslaved children, the text is decidedly anti-Seminole and anti-African-American. The narrative frequently describes the uprising slaves as "hellish" and "horrid," and dwells at length on the Seminoles' "savage modes of torture" and "hatred of the pale-faces" (Anon. 231, 233). Why, then, is Godfrey aided by a maroon, and never redeemed by a white rescuer? The problem of the absent rescuer is exacerbated by the text's association of national identity, and readerly identification, with an active, violent Victorian masculinity rather than the passive, religious colonial identity. As Dana E. Nelson argues, the construction of an American national identity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries involved adapting "white manhood" as "the marker for civic unity" in a competitive capitalist society which relied heavily on the temporary alliance of interests between men in wartime, particularly in racial conflict (Nelson 6). The link between a white masculine fraternity and national identity has its roots in eighteenth-century Federalism,

but becomes increasingly emphatic in the nineteenth century (Nelson 26). Major Dade and his “fated band” exemplify the military fraternal ideal, the “brother[hood] of soldiers” which “provides the model for national homosocial... relations” and promises unity, equality and “emotional mutuality of fraternal sameness” (Anon. 226, Nelson 19-20). At the same time, the failure of Major Dade and later disunity of the Florida volunteers indicate a fundamental ambivalence about the fraternal ideal.

*An Authentic Narrative* is roughly divided in half: the first, organized around Godfrey’s captivity, is filled with descriptions of “many horrid murders” by uprising slaves and Seminoles, in which whites are “inhumanly sacrificed, agreeably to their savage modes of torture” (Anon. 225). The second, organized around Major Dade’s massacre, describes attempts to “check... the fearless ferocity of the savages” by the (white, male) volunteers (Anon. 225). Major Dade represents the American national identity, leading a regiment of “United States troops” described as “a fated band, an elite of energy, patriotism, military skill and constant courage” (Anon. 226). Major Dade and his band represent the national fraternal ideal. Thoroughly heroic, they are united in white male sameness juxtaposed against “the party of savages” and “negroes, with hellish cruelty” (Anon. 227). They also appear to “step outside of competitive, hierarchically ordered relations,” but actually remain vertically organized by the military chain of command, just as Nelson describes the promise and reality of national fraternity (19).<sup>3</sup> In Major Belton’s first-person narration of the massacre, two lieutenants and a captain assume command as the previous commanding officer is killed. Eventually, “Mr. Bassenger, after Capt. Gardner was killed, remarked, ‘I am the only officer left, and boys, we will do the best we can...’” prompting Dr. Catlin to place “himself behind the breast work, and with two double barreled guns said, ‘he had four barrels for them’” (Anon. 226). Membership in the “fated band” offers a space where

men can unite as “brave companions,” and easily assume and discard hierarchical roles, while the fundamental hierarchical organization is maintained. Generals Clinch and Gaines are likewise part of the national fraternity. General Clinch “rel[ies] on the courage and intrepidity of his men” as he marches to avenge Major Dade’s death, and the volunteers and officers at camp are described playing cards together and swimming across a river and “constructing a bridge for the passage of the others” (Anon. 228). The narrative likewise encourages fraternal identification with Major Dade by stirring the reader’s outrage over the “horrid murders” and Godfrey’s captivity, and then offering Dade, Clinch, and Gaines as an instrument for the reader’s vicarious punishment of the savages. Indeed, the narrative anticipates the readerly outrage over Major Dade’s massacre to equal or exceed the outrage over Godfrey’s captivity. The final image is the retreat of the “regular forces... into summer quarters” while “The savages, unsubdued, continue fearlessly to stalk over the graves of Major Dade and his brave companions” (Anon. 234). The narrative asks the reader to support the Seminole War because the Seminoles threaten both white femininity and, more importantly, the imagined national fraternity.

At the same time, *An Authentic Narrative* critiques the stable national identity predicated on fraternity between white men. *An Authentic Narrative* is titled and marketed as a “captivity narrative,” not a war narrative. Major Dade is thus implicitly connected with Godfrey as the emblem of the national identity she supports, or, more concretely, as the (absent) white rescuer. In a more “traditional” captivity narrative, Major Dade and the white volunteers would redeem Godfrey and return her to civilization’s safety. The absence of the white rescuer is not due to lack of potential candidates; Major Dade is en route to Camp King, a major fort less than thirty miles from the New River settlement where Godfrey’s captivity takes place, and the maroon guides Godfrey to “a company of mounted volunteers” recently stationed “in the neighborhood”

(Anon. 223). But the potential rescuers are defeated. Major Dade and his volunteers are overpowered in “butchery more horrid” than any which “stands without an example in the annals of Indian warfare!” (Anon. 226) A first-person narration by Major Belton, who is one of three survivors, describes the slaughter after Major Dade leads his regiment into a Seminole ambush. Major Belton emphasizes the soldiers’ valor and determination and the subsequent “hellish cruelty” of the “Indians and negroes,” shifting focus away from Major Dade’s failure to detect the ambush and overcome the Seminoles (Anon. 227). After Major Dade’s death, Generals Clinch and Gaines, who were partially responsible through inaction, retaliate in a series of “gallant charge[s]” in subsequent engagements, but can only succeed “in driving them back with loss” (Anon. 230-231). At one point, General Gaines is besieged and the men enter a “woful condition... in a savage wilderness” (Anon. 232). They nearly resort to cannibalism before they are relieved, and butcher and eat their faithful dogs. Even after General Gaines gives “positive orders” that his dog, who has a “remarkable attachment to the commanding officer,” is not to be eaten, “the temptation was too great to be resisted by a soldier nearly famished with hunger” (Anon. 232). In a distinctly savage act, the soldier’s physical hunger overcomes his civilized identity and his participation in the national, masculine fraternity. The narrator’s insistence that “the powers of hunger were too great to be resisted, whatever the consequences might be” evokes a similar incident in Rowlandson’s narrative (Anon. 232). In the eighteenth remove, Rowlandson snatches a piece of horse’s foot from an English child and eats it. She immediately justifies her savage action by citing her hunger: “Thus the Lord made that pleasant refreshing, which another time would have been an abomination” (Rowlandson 96). Numerous scholars, including Richard Slotkin, Christopher Castiglia, and Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola have cited this moment as potentially destabilizing Rowlandson’s credibility as a civilized subject.

The destabilization of the civilized identity is even more potent in *An Authentic Narrative* because the soldiers disobey General Gaines' orders and disrupt the fundamental (yet hidden) hierarchy on which national fraternity depends (Nelson 21). The stable national identity premised on white fraternity is disrupted by an internal, overpowering, savage desire.

To drive home the defeat and incoherence of the national masculine identity displayed by Dade, the narrative ends by recounting Generals Clinch and Gaines being deceived by the "cunning chief" Osceola, who is possessed by "deep-rooted hatred of the 'pale faces'" (Anon. 233). Osceola employs "a stratagem by which, after introducing five hundred Indians within the breastworks under the pretense of surrendering... to make an attack with his main force, and taking advantage of the confusion, to massacre the whole before Gen. Clinch could render them any assistance" (Anon. 233). Osceola's stratagem involves penetrating and decentering the organized troops, and relies on the poor communication and disunity between General Gaines' regular troops in Fort Drane and the volunteer forces in Camp King. The same poor organization and disunity prevented General Clinch from relieving Major Dade and preventing his death. Osceola anticipates an internal weakness, specifically an internal incoherence, and exploits it. The final image of the narrative is the retreat of the "regular forces... into summer quarters," while the unsubdued Seminoles defiantly stalk over the graves of Major Dade and his brothers-in-arms (Anon. 234). The displacement of the white rescuer by the sympathetic maroon in Godfrey's captivity narrative, the overpowering savage impulses of the soldiers, and the ultimate failure by the fraternal "band" of white, male patriotism to overpower savagery indicate the fundamental incoherence of the masculine national identity represented by Major Dade. In contrast to Rowlandson's female-centric text, *An Authentic Narrative* is more concerned with male absence than female agency.

*An Authentic Narrative* thus complicates long-standing arguments by captivity narrative scholars about the relation between the female captive's body and the body politic. Christopher Castiglia claims "[captivity] narratives repeatedly draw attention to how and why captive women are framed to produce national power and fantasy," demonstrating "the ideological investments in maintaining the white female body as... implicitly... the body of America" (Castiglia 10). Similarly, Llorayne Carroll argues that depictions of female captives, "especially in their discussions with, and descriptions of, the Native peoples who captured them" allow male writers and readers "opportunities to occupy a participant-observer position distinct from the more conventionally male space of contestation" (Carroll 6). However, the Godfrey captivity moves against this. The addition of Major Dade's narrative both encourages the male reader to reclaim a position of contestation against Native Americans and attests to a re-gendering of "the body of America" (Castiglia 10). In contrast to earlier captivity narratives, the nation is represented by and readers are encouraged to identify with a male protagonist. Thus, the shift from the feminine colony described by Toulouse to the masculine nation described by Nelson changes the way captivity narratives were imagined and deployed in the nineteenth century. As a fabricated captivity tailor-made for political deployment, *An Authentic Narrative* provides insight into the new relationship between the captive's experience and voice and the symbolic national identity.

Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>The problem is first considered in Annette Kolodny's *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860*, and is subsequently explored in Monica D. Fitzgerald's *Gender, Power, Identity, and History in Early New England*, June Namias' *White Captives: Gender and Ethnicity on the American Frontier*, William J. Scheick's *Authority and Female Authorship in Colonial America: the Politics and Poetics of Colonial American Captivity Narratives*, Rebecca Blevins Faery's *Cartographies of Desire: Captivity, Race, and Sex in the Shaping of an American Nation*, and Christopher Castiglia's *Bound and Determined: Captivity, Culture-Crossing, and White Womanhood from Mary Rowlandson to Patty Hearst*.

<sup>2</sup>Ralph Bauer compares Mary Rowlandson's *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* to a Spanish captivity account by Francisco Nunez de Pineda y Bascunan, *Cautiverio feliz*. Both were published as sensationalist "true histories" in Europe. Bauer ties the European titles to the epistemic mercantilism of colonial knowledge production, under which the experiences of a colonial subject needed to be "processed" and properly interpreted by a legitimate scientist-historian (Bauer 126).

<sup>3</sup>Specifically, Nelson argues that the imagined fraternity of white men promised "a space where men can step out of competitive, hierarchically ordered relations and experience rich mutuality of fraternal sameness," thereby relieving the anxiety of personal competition created by a capitalist society (Nelson 19). However, this civic identification functionally split men from one another by "requiring them to manage 'their' competing desires not through a paradigm of equality but rank-order: to 'master' themselves" (Nelson 22). Men were directed to identify not with their peers but with the nation's overruling interest—symbolically and nationally towards the founding fathers and commanding men.

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